Memorandum For The Record

11 November 2002

Subject: Downstream Citizens Group Meeting – Headwaters ROPE

- 1. On Monday, 4 November the subject meeting of the Downstream Citizens Group met at the Corps administration building at Gull Lake. There were 5 participants at this meeting and stakeholders that were represented were not diverse Note the citizen participant were all from Aitkin (see the attached Sign-In Sheet for listing and details regarding the participants).
- 2. Because there was not diverse stakeholder / interest representation at the meeting, the meeting agenda and handouts were only referenced (see the attached for additional information).
- 3. Corps representatives provided a brief overview of the ROPE Study, its scope, and the role of the Downstream Citizens Group and answered a number of general questions about the ROPE study. Considerable discussion and exchange of information regarding the Corps Section 205 flood control study that is proposed this year.
- 4. The primary objective of this meeting was to form/solidify and mobilize this task force.
- 5. A number of additional noteworthy points were discussed during this meeting and are summarized as follows:
 - It was determined that we would need regroup and reach out to river environmental advocate volunteers and to other stakeholders groups in order to have an effective and balance downstream citizens group. There would be a need to coordinate with the media to see if we could recruit volunteers to the group...
 - It was determined that the next meeting should occur in about 1 month and that at that meeting we would seek to solidify and mobilize this important Citizens Group. Upcoming meetings will likely focus on evaluating and inputting into a decision matrix.
 - Frayda Nitschke volunteered to serve as the recorder for the group. A co-chair volunteer to assist with the administration of the group is still being sought.
- 6. This was a constructive initial meeting and all participants at this meeting contributed to the discussions and expressed a willingness to continue their involvements. But, the prime objectives for the meeting were not realized, as there is still a critical need to find additional diverse volunteers for this group. Hopefully, the next Downstream Citizens Group will fully solidify and mobilize this Citizens Group.

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Ed McNally, COE
Task Forces Coordinator/Champion

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Sign-In Sheet Agenda and Handouts

Distribution: All Meeting Participants

Subject: Initial Downstream Citizens Group – at Gull Lake on 4 November 2002 RE: Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Studies

Sign-In Roster

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>		Email and/or T	<u>elephone</u>
1. 2.	Ed Mc.	Nally COE CHKE-44999-378+1A	651-290 INE, AITKIN50	7-5387 1431/fraydanits	7-6445 chke@msn.co
3.	Barb Ver	meersch Air	tK:n	barbVerne	eers che Yahi
4.	BUL FOX	Air	TKIN	SHTSPLU5@C	EMILYNET
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Subject: Initial Meeting of the Downstream Interests Group

RE: Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan

Evaluation (ROPE) Studies

AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions

Name, organization you represent, something about yourself or your organization.

Overview and Status of the ROPE

Overview of scope, schedule, budgets, and processes for this study. (See part 1 of the meeting handouts.)

Explain and Discuss the Roles of this Group and others being formed

Overview of the groups being formed and the roles of each group.

(See part 2 of the meeting handouts and attached Quality Control Plan.)

Discussion of the Task Force.

Are diverse interests represented?

Are key interests missing? If so, how can the group get a representative from that group to volunteer?

What are the potential economic impacts to your organization?

Organize and Mobilize this Task Force

Review and discuss the Ground Rules and Meeting Procedures.

Determine who will lead as Master of Ceremonies (suggest co-leadership).

Determine where, when, and how often the Task Force should meet.

Determine who will record a short summary of minutes of each meeting.

General Open Discussions - (Focus on organizing the group -- as time permits.)

Summary and Discussion of any Follow-up Actions Needed

++++++++	Breakout (Groups fo	or Q&A	++++-	++++
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INVITATION LIST

Invitees to the initial Downstream Interests Group meeting as part of the Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Study.

Mr. Bruce Olsen 121 E. 7th Place #220 St. Paul, MN 55101

Mr. Ross Wagner Aitkin County Courthouse 209 2nd Street NW Aitkin, MN 56431

Ms. Kathy Brophy Aitkin City Administrator/Clerk City Hall 109 1st Avenue NW Aitkin, MN 56431

Mr. Stan Kumpula 4168 Interlachen DR NW Hackensack, MN 56452-2169

Mr. David White, Co-Chairman Star Island Protective League 21 Pheasant Lane Cass Lake, MN 55127

Mr. Gerald White Natural Resources Director, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe 6530 Hwy 2 NW Cass Lake, MN 56633

Mr. James Lilienthal Area Fisheries Manager Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 16543 Hayven Road Little Falls, MN 56345

Mr. Mel Sinn Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources Division of Waters 500 Lafayette Road St. Paul, MN 55155-4032 Ms. Suzanne Plass Audubon Society 26 Exchange St. E. St. Paul, MN 55101

Mr. Tom Selwold MHAC Star Island Group 79 Western Ave. N. #501 St. Paul, MN 55102

Mr. Bob Janzen 523 1st Street NW Aitkin, MN 56431

Dr. Wayne Koncuko Route 2, Box 70 Aitkin, MN 56431

Mr. Dennis Landborg 217 2nd Street NW Aitkin, MN 56431

Ms. Helen McLennen 16776 Heron Rd. Little Falls, MN 56345

Mr. George Orning 301 19th Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55455

Mr. Gordon Prickett 209 Second St. NW Aitkin, MN 56431

Ms. Jean Prickett HC5 Box 16 CC Aitkin, MN 56431

Mr. Brent Speldrich 40424 Nature Ave. Aitkin, MN 56431

Mr. Terry Neff 209 Second St. NW Aitkin, MN 56431

Mr. Steve Hughes Route 4, Box 48 Aitkin, MN 56431

Mr. Chuck Forss Morrison County Water Planner 213 SE First Avenue Little Falls, MN 56345 320/632-0172

Mr. Bruce Johnson Executive Director, The Rivers Council of Minnesota 100 S. Second Avenue, Suite 101 Sauk Rapids, MN 56379 320/259-6800

Mr. Bill Dotzler 42485 380th Lane Aitkin, MN 56431

Ms. Frayda Nitschke 4810 3rd Street NE Fridley, MN 55421

Ms. Barb Vermeersch 43569 373rd Lane Aitkin, MN 56431

Mr. Bill Fox 35414 452nd Place Aitkin, MN 56431

Ms. Susan Johnson Great River Great People 405 1st Street SE Little Falls, MN 56345

Mr. David Brostrom 2159 Berkley St. Paul, MN 55105

Mr. James Hodgson Minnesota Pollution Control Agency 1601 Minnesota Drive Brainerd, MN 56401

Ms. Brenda Halter-Glenn, Forest Hydrologist Chippewa National Forest Rt. 3, Box 244 Cass Lake, MN 56633

Ms. Mary Blickenderfer U of M Ext., Shoreline Bioengineering 1861 E. Hwy 169 Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Corps Reps

Mr. John O'Leary, Headwaters Operations Rep 190 Fifth Street East St. Paul, MN 55101

Mr. Ed McNally, Project Management Rep 190 Fifth Street East St. Paul, MN 55101

Mr. Gregg Struss, Gull Lake Operations 10867 E. Gull Lake Dr. NW Brainerd, MN 56401

Overview - Fact Sheet Mississippi Headwaters Systemwide ROPE Study

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service are embarking on a jointly sponsored, long-range operating plan study for the Mississippi River Headwaters reservoirs. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Ottertail Power, and Minnesota Power are collaborating Headwaters dam operators included in this planning effort and will help to evaluate and recommend a systemwide operational plan for the Headwaters reservoirs. The Mississippi Headwaters Board and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe will also play important roles in this study by helping to coordinate and evaluate alternative plans from the regional perspective. This study is called a **Reservoir Operating Plan Evaluation**, or ROPE, study. It began in December 2001 and will continue for the next 4 years.

The process to be used for the ROPE study will rely heavily on interagency and public groups to assist in the plan formulation throughout the study. Accordingly, numerous interagency task forces and local lake groups will be formed, and these volunteer groups will meet periodically to provide technical and public inputs and perspective. The general public will also be kept informed and involved in the study, as well as being asked to review a number of preliminary reports as alternatives are formulated and evaluated.

The primary purpose of the study is to evaluate alternative plans and to recommend a new operating plan for the Mississippi Headwaters Reservoirs system with consideration given to tribal trust, flood control, environmental concerns, water quality, water supply, recreation, navigation, hydropower and more. The plan should provide the optimum benefit to the many interests affected by the operation of the Headwaters dams for the greater public good. Some possible outcomes could be lake level changes, winter drawdown changes, restoration of some sections of river systems, a more natural flow release for the downstream river reach and, in some lake areas, changes in flood control concerns for differing sections of the total system and possibly even the purchase of some land for maximizing efficient operation. In addition, other spin-off projects and beneficial activities in the Headwaters area could result from this study process.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service and other non-Federal operators are currently looking for volunteers to participate in lake groups and on technical task forces. Each reservoir, including Lake Winnibigoshish, Leech Lake, Pokegama Lake, Big Sandy Lake, Cross Lake and Gull Lake, as well as Lake Bemidji/Stump Lake, the entire Cass Lake chain and Prairie Lake, will have its own lake forum group. These groups will begin meeting this summer. So, if you are interested in volunteering to become a member or simply want more information about this study, please contact the following persons.

Ed McNally, Project Manager St. Paul District, Army Corps of Engineers

Phone: 651-290-5387

Email: edward.l.mcnally@mvp02.usace.army.mil

Brenda Halter-Glenn, Forest Hydrologist Chippewa National Forest, U.S. Forest Service

Phone: 218-335-8651

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John O'Leary, Headwaters Operations Manager St. Paul District, Army Corps of Engineers

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Excerpts From QUALITY CONTROL PLAN

Upper Mississippi River (UMR) Headwaters Reservoirs Project

Study: Operating Plans for UMR Headwaters Reservoirs – Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Project i.e., Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation (ROPE)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the study is to identify an operating plan for the Corps of Engineers operated Headwaters Reservoirs with consideration given to flood control, environmental concerns, water supply, tribal trust, recreation, navigation, hydropower, water quality, and other purposes to meet the objectives identified in the plan of study. This plan would then replace the existing operations plans, which were last formulated about 40 years ago. This ROPE plan should protect the tribal trust relationship and provide the optimum benefit to the many interests affected by the operation of these dams -- for the greater public good.

In addition to the six Corps of Engineers Headwaters Reservoirs and the Upper Mississippi River, the operation of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Knutson Dam at Cass Lake will be evaluated in this study. Recommended changes in the design and operation of the Knutson Dam will be evaluated in the study and assessed in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for this ROPE. Partnering with the U.S. Forest Service will be accomplished to realize this purpose.

To the extent that resources permit, a systemwide and comprehensive optimization for operation of all interconnected Headwaters Lakes and the Mississippi River will be pursued (i.e., a number of non-Corps dams operated by the U.S. Forest Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Ottertail Power, and Minnesota Power are to be included in the systemwide operations evaluations – to extent possible within resources constraints).

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the economic, environmental, engineering, and tribal interests inventories and analysis done as part of this ROPE is to gather enough data to model the net effect or changes that result from different operating plans on project outputs from a national economic development (NED), an environmental quality (EQ), and a regional perspective (including tribal perspective). Consideration should be given to the fact that some of the outputs are quantitative and some are qualitative, some are of a local or regional focus, some may have a higher priority than others, and trade-offs will be involved. To adequately screen and select the systemwide operations plan, a matrix

of National Economic Development (NED) and National Ecosystem Restoration (NER) and regional and local concerns will be used.

Alternatives will be developed from the identified list of specific planning objectives. Various impacts of developed alternatives will be identified by comparing the existing and/or base condition with the anticipated condition with any given alternative. The process used to identify, screen, and select alternatives will be based on a planning process that seeks to include and involve all stakeholders, managing agencies, and the public. The planning process to be used will seek public, stakeholder, and agency inputs and reviews at numerous strategic points and will seek final recommendations that have consensus and synergy. Ultimately, the St. Paul District Engineer will make a recommendation regarding the Corps operations after weighing the various alternatives. Similarly, the U.S. Forest Service Director will evaluate alternatives associated with the Knutson Dam.

BACKGROUND:

Construction of the Corps/Federal dams at each of the six Mississippi River Headwaters lakes was authorized by the River and Harbor Acts of June 14, 1880, and August 2, 1882. The primary purpose for operation of these dams is to facilitate low flow augmentation for navigation consistent with Federal tribal trust responsibilities, but other purposes have since been added – including flood reduction, fish and wildlife conservation, recreation, and hydropower. In 1918, J. Neils Lumber Company constructed a small dam at the outlet of Cass Lake. After completion of their lumbering operations, Neils no longer needed the dam. In 1926, Public Law 270 gave the responsibility for operating and maintaining the dam to the U.S. Forest Service. Today, Knutson Dam is managed to maintain lake levels that allow for recreational navigation.

The primary goal of the proposed systemwide ROPE study will be improving regulation of the Corps of Engineers Headwaters Reservoirs including Leech, Winnibigoshish, Sandy, Pine (Whitefish chain), Pokegama, and Gull Lakes. Knutson Dam and the associated Cass Lake impoundment will also be included in the evaluation and recommendations documented by this study. The existing Headwaters Corps and Forest Service dams and reservoir regulations and associated natural resources management plans are to be examined. Targets for reservoir water levels and river discharge would be set for points in the system for different times of year based on consultations with stakeholders. The emphasis will be on meeting current and projected future needs for:

- Navigation (to the very limited extent that it is still a Federal mission)
- Tribal trust resources (including wild ricing, fishing, hunting, and other tribal interests)
- Flood damage reduction (reductions in flood damages around the lakes and downstream)
- Fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, restoration, and preservation for lake and river related habitats

- Recreation and related tourism
- Water quality, water supply (flow augmentation), and drought reduction
- Erosion and sedimentation (attempting to reduce lake and riverine damages)
- Hydropower electrical production
- Sustaining hydrologic function on associated lakes and rivers

There is also a strong desire to extend reservoir operational planning to adjacent controlled lakes (Lake Bemidji, Stump Lake Dam - operated by Ottertail Power Company, Mud/Goose Lake - Mud Lake Dam operated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Prairie River Dam, Prairie Lake - operated by Minnesota Power and Light) to optimize the lake regulation and make operations more systemwide, comprehensively and holistically. In order to have the final ROPE study fully supported by the public, stakeholders, and agencies, more inclusive resource inventory evaluations will be accomplished outside the prime geographic focus area to include adjacent non-Corps operated lakes and adjacent lakes affected by the Corps operations. This inclusive approach will be used to the extent that the Corps can secure cooperation and adequate resources.

The outputs of this plan are most likely to focus on changes in operations for Corps, Forest Service, and other system reservoir plans. Structural/physical and environmental improvements conceptualized and recommended as a result of this study are expected to cost from \$4 million to \$20 million for construction and/or associated land acquisition. The nature of such construction and possible land acquisition will be defined and fully coordinated during the study. But, it is anticipated that physical changes in the design of some of the existing dams may be needed to improve operations and that acquisition of a few small areas where flooding occurs regularly may be needed to fully realize the potential of an optimized operating plan. Accordingly, it is assumed that the outcomes of this plan could have a significant real or perceived effect upon the human or natural environment.

KEY PRODUCTS AND TASK DESCRIPTIONS:

The primary output of this QCP will be the completion of a systemwide ROPE study and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This study could recommend specific Federal projects and/or changes in water regulation related to Mississippi River Headwaters reservoirs and downstream reaches of the Upper Mississippi River. This study and the associated EIS will be accomplished over a 4- to 5-year period.

Key intermediate phases to be accomplished as part of this study include the following:

1. Objectives and goals identification and related resources inventories (use Partnering Group, Delivery Team, Task Forces, and Watershed/Lake Forum Groups to help identify, collect, and evaluate).

- 2. Coordination via EIS scoping, to define existing and future "without project" conditions and to define an array of alternative operating plans.
- 3. Modeling/evaluation and screening of alternatives (using economic, environmental, and cultural/political/legal criteria) initial screening done with available information and judgments and final screening and plan selection done at a more detailed level of evaluation using new inventories.
- 4. Defining and coordinating a preliminary recommended plan and related mitigation plan (as needed), and preparing a NEPA assessment as a draft ROPE report phase (use U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service support for endangered species, Coordination Act requirements, and ecosystems evaluations).
- 5. Mediation with conflicting interests and final ROPE report and associated EIS documentation (with programmatic agreements), as needed.
- 6. Preparation of fully coordinated programmatic agreements to evaluate and protect cultural resources potentially affected by the recommended changes in operations.
- 7. Complete documentation of the final ROPE report and EIS.

Key evaluations needed to accomplish this work are listed below. (Note: It is recognized that other items of work will evolve during the study and will be added to the study scope, as needed.)

- 1. Identify relevant objectives, goals, constraints, and opportunities (use the considerable available public and interagency inputs obtained via the Headwaters Scoping Letter Report prepared in 1999 and the Upper Mississippi River Reconnaissance Study prepared in 2001).
- 2. Establish a Partnering Group (via a partnering meeting) to provide policy and vision (with tribal, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, Mississippi Headwaters Board, U.S. Forest Service, Audubon Society, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Corps of Engineers members). This group will also come together at the screening alternatives and plan selection time frames to discuss common ground, trade-offs, synergy, and consensus. These partnering group meetings are likely to be led by a trained conflict resolution facilitator and are likely to require 2 to 3 days each to be effective.
- 3. Establish resource interagency Task Forces for Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, Flood Control/Erosion Control, Water Supply/Hydropower, Recreation and Tourism, and Public Involvement/Education. These task forces will be heavily relied upon to provide study related inputs regarding inventories and evaluations needed to screen alternatives and assess impacts. They will also provide technical groups for reviewing the intermediate reports and aid in plan formulation evaluations. These

groups will meet independently and periodically, as needed, to provide guidance and inputs to the delivery team.

- 4. Establish diverse stakeholders Lake Groups for each of the watershed lake chains to obtain local inputs and to provide regular status reports on the study progress. These lake groups will meet periodically, as needed, to provide guidance and inputs to the delivery team and to receive project status information.
- 5. Establish existing condition and without project conditions scenarios. This will involve utilizing existing pre-project data sources and coordinating intensively with cooperating interagency task force groups to establish the foundation for these scenarios. For example, a review of cultural resource survey coverage of the reservoir system to date will be conducted and an inventory of known cultural resources will be compiled. This data will be incorporated into a Geographic Information System and used together with other data sets to identify cultural resource priorities and assess the effects of reservoir operation on cultural resources.
- 6. Coordinate with and/or contract with tribal entities to identify and fully evaluate and integrate the tribal interest for each of the Headwater lakes. This information will be collected early in the planning process and fully integrated into the formulation and impact assessments. A work group will be established to address cultural resource issues in the Headwaters, including Traditional Cultural Properties, and to review and assist in the formulation of cultural resource input for key study products. Prior to the partnering group evaluations screening of alternatives meeting, a meeting will be held with the tribes to define the tribal trust issues and to frame the alternatives from the tribal perspective. A similar tribal meeting will be held prior to the partnering group evaluations to discuss and select a "best plan." The tribal entities will also work with the delivery team towards development of a programmatic agreement that will lead to a comprehensive historic property management plan for the Headwaters project. This group will also be relied upon to provide historical background regarding the tribal interests and concerns about the Headwaters Reservoir Projects. This will be included in the final ROPE study for context and better understanding regarding the tribal issue associated with construction and operation of the project.
- 7. Develop detailed hydrologic models for use in simulating the operation and regulation of the dams and reservoirs in the Headwaters region. It is not clear at this juncture what level of detail the analysis of alternatives will require. This deliverable assumes that a reservoir system based model, such as HEC-5/HEC-RES (or similar), will be used to model alternatives to the current reservoir regulation plan. It is also assumed that the modeling effort will extend only down to the City of Aitkin and that Cross Lake and Gull Lake reservoirs will not require extensive modeling efforts. The guidelines presented here can be adapted to a more or less detailed model if necessary. Daily flows for a total of 15 years will be used in the model. The 15 years will be divided into 3 to 5 contiguous year periods that represent flood, moderate, and dry periods. Ratios of these periods may be used to represent extreme events. The model

will simulate natural conditions, existing conditions, and as many as 100 proposed conditions. Future meetings with stakeholders will define the number of proposed conditions. The geographical extent of the model will be from Cass, Winnibigoshish, and Leech Lakes at the upstream end to Royalton at the downstream end. The model may start at Lake Bemidji if additional funding is found.

- 8. Define hydropower generation capacity, river flow requirements, and desired conditions for downstream hydropower plants and fully consider and integrate into project formulation evaluations and impact assessments.
- 9. Prepare economic inventories for lake areas and downstream reaches for all project outputs (including public and commercial recreation/tourism, commercial wild rice, flood reduction, drought economic impact reduction, low flow augmentation and water supply), and generate comparative economics models to simulate benefits associated with a variety of possible operational alternatives. Keep the benefits attributable to alternative actions separated so that all benefit categories can easily be segregated for comparisons. Input screening data/evaluations into a matrix that will be used to compare and screen the alternatives.
- 10. Prepare an inventory of existing Federal land ownership easements for all lakes in the system and determine the level and nature of easement rights. Determine if additional compensation is needed for "hot spot" areas and to allow for changes in operation. Determine additional acquisitions that may be needed to adequately compensate landowners if there are any impacts to them due to a change in Federal operations.
- 11. Conduct an inventory of the water control structures in the UMR Headwaters region upstream of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The inventory should include information on the storage/outlet capacity, condition, operations and other pertinent information about the major water control structures in the basin. The operational condition of these structures will be evaluated to determine if physical improvements are warranted (e.g., at Winnibigoshish Dam, the upstream slope of the embankment is a steep, grouted riprap slope about 800 feet long. Over time, grouted riprap cracks, allowing wave action to remove soil from beneath the riprap resulting in voids. We have performed some maintenance on the slope in the past but it is an ongoing problem that will have to be fully addressed in the future. Our most likely solution, not considering environmental benefits, would be to break up or remove the grouted riprap and replace it with riprap at a flatter slope. Slope protection is important because the embankment is constructed of very erodible soil. This may be a good project to try to combine environmental enhancement with embankment protection because, while it is not an immediate problem, something will have to be done in the future).
- 12. Prepare reservoir drawdown and operating bands inventories and evaluations and integrate into an array of alternatives via modeling using the Corps-developed HEC-

5/HEC-RES computer hydrologic model. These efforts will be used to compare and optimize regulation of multiple reservoirs systemwide.

- 13. Determine the channel capacity of the river channels below the dams in the Headwaters to determine flood control and fish and wildlife issues. Also, determine the dam discharge capacities. Channel capacity is related to flood control in two ways: 1) What is the non-damaging discharge a river reach can sustain during an actual flood event and, thus, when should the reservoir store water? 2) What is the available channel capacity available for releasing water from the reservoir to allow the winter drawdown to occur (in preparation for spring flooding)? Knowing the channel capacity in various reaches of the river will also help evaluate habitat and other issues related to fish and wildlife. The channel capacity in some reaches is dynamic due to the effect of aquatic plants, floating bogs and ice jams. Also, determine reservoir storage capacity for pool elevations below the present operation limits for use in evaluating the effect of low water levels. Reservoir storage capacity data is available for the Present Operating Limits within each reservoir. However, storage capacity data for extremely low pool elevations may be needed to evaluate the effects of low water on fish and wildlife habitat and other uses both in the reservoir and downstream. Environmental surveys of lake and river reaches to obtain channel geometry, velocity, depth, substrate, cover, and water quality will be used in combination with other pertinent water and natural resources data. This data, in combination with extensive coordination with resource agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources will provide opportunity and constraints information critical to project formulation. It is envisioned that interagency and special interest representatives will participate in a natural resource work group. This work group will be relied upon for technical inputs to the project formulations and impact assessments. Data on channel geometry, stage/discharge relationships, substrate, cover, water quality, bathymetry, land use and drainage networks, and soils will need to be integrated into the plan formulation and assessment work.
- 14. A Geographic Information System (GIS) based Watershed Modeling System will be used to the extent that O&M and supplemental funding can be secured to fully inventory and distributively model overland flows to allow evaluation of alternative remedial solutions to water management/water quality problems.
- 15. A fully coordinated study approach is proposed which will require an extensive Public Involvement and education program that will be defined and coordinated via an interagency task force; non-Federal governmental entities, stakeholder, and the general public will be heavily involved in the cooperative formulation of alternatives and in the evaluation and selection of recommended revised operational plans (largely through lake advisory committees, workshops, and newsletters). To make the outputs more comprehensive and acceptable politically, many agencies will be asked to become actively involved in the inventory, evaluation/formulation of recommended actions (much of this will be accomplished via focus area working task forces and/or through

participation on the study delivery team). The entities to be actively involved in the formulation process include but are not limited to the Mississippi Headwaters Board, interested watershed management Districts, Lake Associations, the Leech Lake Bands, the Sandy Lake Band, and the Mille Lacs Band, numerous State of Minnesota agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, and special interest and environmental entities such as the McKnight Foundation and Ducks Unlimited, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- 16. Prepare a Programmatic Agreement for Cultural and Historical Resources. This will be coordinated fully through a cultural resources task force and will involve the State Historic Preservation Office and the State Advisory Committee for cultural resources.
- 17. Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address any recommended changes in reservoir operations as well as any programmatic initiatives identified by the ROPE study. Such initiatives might include structural changes in the dam structures, operational changes that would benefit fish and wildlife or improve human conditions around the lakes and/or downstream of the dams. Other actions to be evaluated and recommended by this ROPE study include environmental restoration projects that can be integrated into the existing Federal project. Because the ROPE study will likely include assessment of the Knutson Dam on Cass Lake, which is owned by the U.S. Forest Service, the Forest Service will be invited to participate in preparation of the EIS as a partner agency. Other groups, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Mississippi Headwaters Board, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Leech Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Sandy Lake Band, and Mille Lacs Band will be invited to participate as cooperating agencies in preparation of the EIS. It is likely that the EIS would be a two-tiered document with the second tier of detail being provided after the ROPE study is completed. A mitigation plan will be prepared and fully coordinated, as needed.
- 18. If needed, at the Draft Report stage, conduct a mediation session with the affected stakeholders to begin to facilitate resolution of issues and to refine the finalized/recommended operations plans.
- 19. Coordinate with non-Corps lake system operators to collect additional lake structures and environmental inventories. Specifically, Lake Bemidji, Stump Lake Dam (operated by Ottertail Power Company), Cass Lake, Knutson Dam (operated by the U.S. Forest Service), Mud Lake Dam (operated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources), and Prairie River Dam, Prairie Lake (operated by Minnesota Power and Light). NOTE: Without such information, any systemwide approach will be significantly impaired and may not be undertaken as part of this ROPE and EIS study.
- 20. Establish and maintain an up-to-date link to ROPE activities on the St. Paul District web page.

ANTICIPATED SPIN-OFF PRODUCTS FROM THE ROPE:

Many secondary spin-off products will result from this ROPE. These products will take the form of a variety of inventories, undated models, improved coordination mechanisms, and possible Federal and/or State and local projects. A few examples of anticipated or potential study outputs follow:

- 1. Data and evaluation of existing flood prone structures in the Aitkin, Minnesota, area that will be useful in formulating local flood protection for that community.
- 2. Potential small flood reduction projects at Sandy Lake and other areas that have periodic flood problems.
- 3. Potential structural changes at the existing dams to allow for better future operations (e.g., Knutson Dam).
- 4. Updated hydraulic modeling and environmental data that will allow for future continuing authority environmental restoration projects.
- 5. Inventories of tribal interests in the study area that will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of tribal trust relationships.
- 6. Updated and/or more comprehensive natural resource inventories of natural and cultural resources for future use by all levels of government (e.g., Leech Lake vegetation inventories).
- 7. Identification/inventory of erosion areas and potential small bank protection projects to protect public resources.
- 8. Improved interagency network to allow for better and more coordinated management actions at all levels of government.

STUDY COST AND SCHEDULE:

In spite of substantial efforts to solidify cost-sharing sponsors to accomplish a cost shared comprehensive study for the Headwaters area, there are no formalized non-Corps Sponsors for such a study. However, efforts are still under way to see if non-Federal or local Sponsors can be relied on to informally provide staff assistance, financial resources, needed inventories and analysis, or other related cooperation that would benefit this ROPE Study. In that regard, an informal agreement with the Mississippi Headwaters Board has been reached to have them assist in the public involvement associated with the ROPE study. Also, an agreement now being formalized with the U.S. Forest Service would establish a mechanism for cooperative evaluations, planning, and design associated with the Knutson Dam. Efforts to get the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, and Minnesota Environmental Quality Board committed to

cooperative inventories of the littoral areas of the non-Corps lakes within the system will also be actively pursued with those entities. Participation of these entities and other local government and local interest groups will be sought in establishment of focus work groups.

The inventory, analysis, project plan formulation, and environmental documentations needed for this study to comprehensively optimize the Headwaters reservoirs would begin in FY01 and extend through FY04. The scope of work will evolve as the study unfolds and will be reevaluated each fiscal year with the assistance of cooperating agencies. The total cost of this work is anticipated to be approximately \$2.5 million of Federal/Corps of Engineers O&M funds plus the cost of non-Corps participants. It is now anticipated that an additional \$500,000 to \$1,500,000 of in-kind services can be contributed by other entities (e.g., these could be provided formally or informally as money, in-kind services, and/or, as needed, new inventories) to make the study more comprehensive and inclusive of a larger geographic area.

The tentative Corps of Engineers O&M funded portion of these studies is expected to be \$660,000 in FY01, \$300,000 in FY02, \$938,000 in FY03, \$312,000 in FY04, and \$292,000 in FY05. This is subject to funds availability and potentially changing priorities for District O&M funds.

STUDY COORDINATION PROCESS/WEB:

The coordination associated with formulation of the ROPE is planned to be accomplished via a number of "coordination groups" with varying roles and responsibilities and will involve extensive public involvement and an education program. The membership and roles of each group will evolve as the process unfolds. The following table summarizes aspects of these coordination groups.

Coordination Groups	Key Members of Each Group	Purposes and Roles of Groups	Relationships with Other Groups and Remarks
Partnering Group	Upper management reps from prime local, State, tribal, Federal agencies, and other key stakeholders.	Provide general study oversight and review, priority for funding, and resolve policy issues.	Provide the Corps District Engineer and U.S. Forest Service Director with common ground recommendations and high level agency and stakeholder positions.
Tribal Interests Group	Reps from Leech, Mille Lacs/Sandy Lake Bands of the Ojibwe Tribe/nation, Dakota Bands, and Corps and Bureau of Indian Affairs representatives.	Provide technical inputs regarding tribal interests into evaluation matrix and review comments.	Work closely with the Corps PM/Opers. PM/District Engineer and U.S. Forest Service reps to establish a constructive nation-to-nation dialogue and avoid tribal trust conflicts.
Downstream Interest Group	Diverse group of interested citizens and officials from Cities of Aitkin, St. Cloud, and Minneapolis, with Corps engineering and Operations Manager leadership.	Provide non-technical inputs regarding downstream effects into the evaluation matrix and for use in the EIS. Review study reports from the downstream public's perspective.	Work closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team downstream interests champion/s.
Task Force Groups			
Environmental/Natural Resources Reps from a variety of natural reso agencies and environmental group reps will include MDNR, COE, and tribes, MHB, and Environmental Gr representatives, etc).		Provide technical inputs regarding environmental matters into the EIS, evaluation matrix, to help collect relevant environmental inventories and set technical evaluation criteria, review reports, and identify environmental issues and opportunities.	Work closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team environmental champion.
Flood Control/Erosion Control	Reps to include City of Aitkin, MHB, various lake association reps, USFS reps, MDNR, Fifty Lakes Association, Star Island Association, and Corps engineering and PM.	Provide technical flood reduction and erosion protection inputs into the evaluation matrix, and report reviews regarding environmental issues and opportunities.	Work closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team environmental champion and with the public involvement and education task force.
Public Involvement/Education	Reps from Audubon Society, MHB, Corps PAO, Corps PM and Operations Manager, and USFS reps.	Help to develop and implement the Public Involvement program. Assist the Delivery Team and associated group champions with logistics of media and public releases/notices and newsletters.	Work closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team environmental champion. Support study awareness and education efforts through the lake groups and various media.

Hydropower and Downstream Uses	Reps include Otter Tail Power, Minnesota Power, MDNR, Aitkin officials, MPCA, MHB, and Corps engineering and operations champions and Forest Service reps.	Provide technical inputs into the evaluation matrix and EIS. Review reports from downstream perspective.	Work closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team downstream interests champion and hydropower and water supply representatives. Interface with the public involvement task force to educate and inform downstream users.
Cultural/Historic Preservation	Reps will include the Minnesota SHPO, tribal preservation officers, and Corps and USFS cultural reps.	Develop baseline data for effects cultural evaluation for input into matrix and EIS, review of reports	Work closely with the tribal interests group and the Corps and U.S. Forest Service cultural reps.
Recreation and Tourism	Reps will include Minnesota Planning and MDNR, University of Minnesota reps, regional tourism groups, and Corps and USFS reps.	Develop baseline data for recreation and tourism effects evaluation for input into matrix and EIS, review of reports.	Work closely with the study delivery team through the delivery team recreation champion. Interface with the public involvement task force to educate and inform downstream users.
Lake Groups			
Leech Lake Chain	Diverse group of local interests representing users of the lake (includes representatives from Lake Association, chambers of commerce, sportsman groups, resorts, lakeshore owners, immediate downstream river users, other local stakeholders, and interested local citizens).	Forum for non-technical inputs regarding lake chain effects into the evaluation matrix and for use in the EIS. Act as a means of communicating information to public regarding ongoing study progress. Review study reports from the local public's perspective.	Work closely with the study delivery team through the Corps park manager and/or U.S. Forest Service representatives and with the public involvement and education task force to assist with distribution of newsletters and media announcements.
Winnibigoshish/Cass Lake Chain	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above
Sandy Lake Chain	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above
Pokegama Lake Chain	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above
Cross Lake Chain	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above
Gull Lake Chain	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above
Lake Bemidji	Same as Leech Chain above	Same as Leech Chain above except that Otter Tail Power representatives will need to assist in coordination associated with this group.	Same as Leech Chain above except that Otter Tail Power representatives will need to coordinate much of this effort.
Project Delivery Team	Representatives from a number of functional offices in the St Paul District Corps will serve on this team (see the complete list of team members in this QCP). In addition, non-Corps representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, MDNR, tribal interests, MHB, Audubon Society, etc., will serve on this working team.	Responsible for data collection, evaluation, assessment, plan formulations, and documentation of the ROPE and associated EIS. This group works together to evaluate, screen, and select alternative operation plans. It then provides recommendations to the St. Paul District Engineer and the U.S. Forest Service Director for their approval.	Provide leadership and guidance to the various Lake Groups and Task Forces and receive inputs from those groups for incorporation into the evaluation matrix and use this in the plan formulations and impact assessments. With the assistance of the Public Involvement Task Force, maintain an up-to-date web page for ROPE activities and announcements.

GROUND RULES AND MEETING PROCEDURES

<u>All</u> participants **need to be respectful and respected**. Everyone needs to be **heard** and **listened to** (i.e., follow the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you).

Seek to be inclusive of volunteers from diverse interests that represent a cross-section of lake users, landowners, and stakeholders.

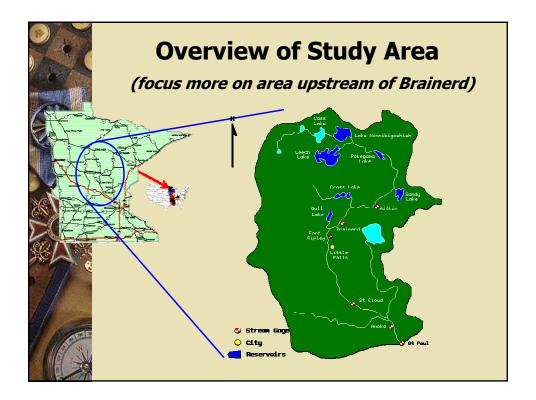
The meeting chair and all members of the group should try to stay on track to accomplish the primary purpose for each meeting (i.e., try to address items on the agenda). This will allow meetings to be completed within 1 to 2 hours and accomplishment of the most critical items.

Meetings should be recorded, and minutes of the meeting should be verified at the following meeting by the group. This documentation insures that results of the meeting are available for anyone who was not able to attend or wants to recall what happened.

If there are questions, they can be asked at a breakout session following the meeting and/or submitted in writing to the operators for response. Many such questions will also be posted on the Corps ROPE web page under FAQ (frequently asked questions). That way, anyone who has the same question can access a complete response.









Scope + Vision

- Detailed in the QCP (See Handout)
 - Budget (\$2.5 million Corps + USFS funding)
 - Schedule (4 more years)
 - Planning Process
- Keys to the Planned Process
 - Inclusive Public Involvement Process
 - EIS and Screening Report
 - Systemwide Approach
 - Matrix Scenario Based Evaluations

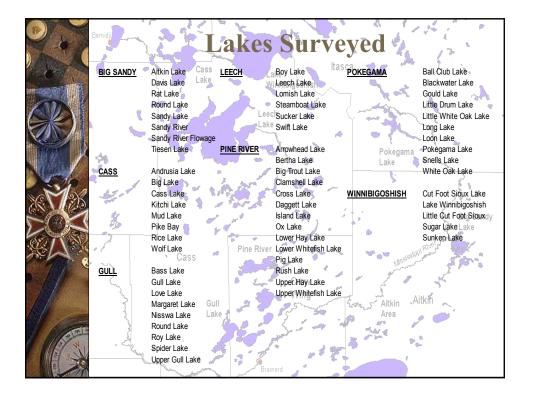


Matrix Evaluations

Simplified Sample

(NOTE: It will actually be much more comprehensive)

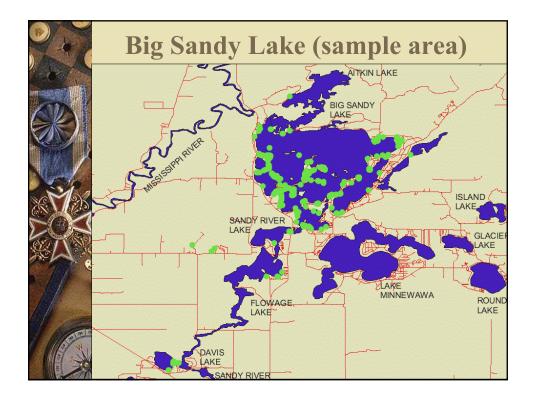
Outputs	Affects +/-	Remarks
Tribal Interests		
Trust Resources		
Environmental		
Water Quality		
Habitat		
Cultural Resources		
Recreation		
National		
Local/Regional		
Flood Control		
National		
Local/Regional		
Navigation & Other		

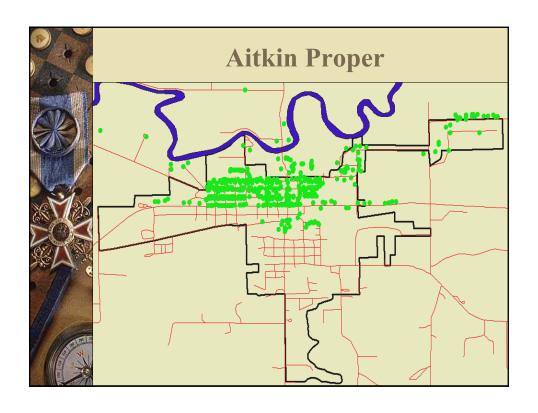


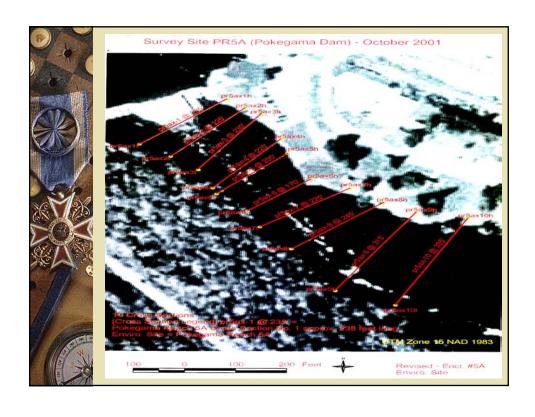


Number of Structures Found

Area	Commercial	Residential	Denied Access	Total
Aitkin	143	439	13	595
Big Sandy	9	254	2	265
Cass	10	68	0	78
Gull	2	83	7	92
Leech	10	136	0	146
Pine River	1	113	2	116
Pokegama	0	27	1	28
Winnibigoshish	2	15	0	17
Total	177	1,135	25	1,337











Many "Players" in the ROPE

(See table on the last pages of the pre-meeting information for details on various group roles)

- Partnering Group (overview by policy makers)
- **Delivery Team** (inter-disciplinary work team)
- Task Forces (technical interagency groups)
- Lake Groups (diverse local input groups of volunteers...)
- Other Groups
 - Tribal (Leech and Mille Lac/Sandy Bands inputs)
 - Downstream Interests (inputs from Aitkin, St. Cloud, Twin Cities, etc...)



More on Role of Lake Groups

- Provides upfront local inputs, perceptions, data collection & inventories and facts
- Provides ongoing matrix evaluations inputs
- Conducts reviews of Screening Report, Draft Report, and Final Reports
- Builds local understanding, trust, consensus (where possible)
- Establishes a means of two-way education & communications
- Assists in distribution of ROPE info and outreach to localized public and stakeholders



What Lake Groups Meetings Are and Are Not

- They are working meetings of local volunteers with focused agendas that are intended to receive local inputs and perspective which will then be integrated into the ROPE plan formulation.
- They are <u>not</u> public presentation meetings, hearings, or public open houses for the general public or media.

<u>NOTE:</u> The general public and media will be allowed to observe any of the lake group meetings. Also, at strategic points in the ROPE formulation there will be general presentation meetings and open houses specifically for the general public and media.